



15 years of AHDR

INTERVIEW WITH THE CO-PRESIDENTS
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15 years on... To what extent has the organization fulfilled its goals?

During the last 15 years AHDR has managed to established itself as a unique intercommunal civil society organisation working in the field of education gaining positive reputation and recognition both at local and European level. AHDR's work has had a significant contribution to the promotion of history education in Cyprus, across the existing divide.

A great number of educators from all communities in Cyprus have had the opportunity of receiving training from AHDR and its experts on up-to-date history teaching methodology and on issues relating to controversial issues, gender and building peace while AHDR's supplementary educational materials showcasing AHDR's approaches to teaching History are available and can be used by any teacher both in the Turkish Cypriot and the Greek Cypriot communities as they are trilingual. Furthermore, AHDR has enriched its mission and its activities taking the lead in Peace Education in Cyprus by providing training opportunities to both teachers and children from across the existing divide.

AHDR is also very proud of the Home for Cooperation which stands today in the area controlled by the UN providing an exceptional educational and cultural space with access to all people across the island. Even though we are very proud of AHDR's achievements in the last fifteen years, it is our firm belief that we still have a very long distance to cover to have a significant impact on the educational advancement in Cyprus.





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What were the AHDR's biggest challenges at the outset?

At the outset, AHDR's biggest challenge was the lack, in 2003, of any existing contact or any type of collaboration between educators and teachers from the two communities. We underline here that it was only in 2003 that the restrictions of movement, across the existing divide, were partly removed, after almost 30 years of restrictions. Another challenge was that the two communities never had a joint educational system. On the contrary, in both the communities education had a major role in the promotion of nationalism and the prolongation and deepening of the separation and conflict.

What inspired you to set up the AHDR?

In many other European countries, there are History Teachers Organisations which are also members of EUROCLIO, the European Association of History Teachers. These organisations were the model for the establishment of AHDR. Given the political particularities in Cyprus and the fact that history education suffered as a tool mainly for the perpetuation of ethnocentric mono-perspectival narratives, AHDR aimed to re-introduce history education as a tool for the enhancement of historical understanding and critical thinking.

How do you envision the AHDR in the next 15 years?

In the next 15 years, we would like to see AHDR to attract more involvement from people from various backgrounds as members from all over Cyprus, to continue providing opportunities for professional development to teachers and training opportunities for children and young people. We would like to see our educational materials to be available and be used by schools in a re-united Cyprus, where all children and young people, regardless of their backgrounds will be educated in the same classrooms and platforms within the framework of values and principles the AHDR advocates for.

